

TUSCALOOSA COUNTY

Honorable Phillip N. Lisenby

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Herschel Hamner
Faye Royal
Susan Windham
Byron Waid
Tammy Yager
Tracy Schofield
Cathy Wooldridge
Sandra Anderson



PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All children will have access to effective education and enrichment opportunities from birth to age 19
2. All children will be healthy, safe, and drug free
3. All children will live in safe and stable families with access to parent education, teen pregnancy prevention, mental health services, economic support and other prevention and treatment services

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.

Health - Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

All children should have access to medical and dental care

Policy Council Action Steps:

- support efforts to expand existing transportation services and explore new transportation services
- support expansion of targeted case management services for the medically at risk
- support continued funding for publicly available children's insurance

Availability of mental health care

Policy Council Action Steps:

- support efforts to develop inpatient crisis services for children in Tuscaloosa County
- support a range of comprehensive mental health services for treatment of children and families

STD prevention, education and access to treatment

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Support effective strategies to distribute STD prevention and education material
- Encourage adolescent awareness of STD treatment services

Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Prevalence of drugs

Policy Council Action Steps:

- support continuation of Drug court in Tuscaloosa County
- support expanded prevention and treatment for substance abuse
- support law enforcement efforts to decrease drug and/or drug related offenses

Youth violence and bullying

Policy Council Action Steps:

- support community and faith based programs that address youth violence, sexual assault, and bullying
- encourage intervention with children and families who are involved in domestic violence

Suicide

Policy Council Action Steps:

- support community and faith based programs that address suicide prevention and grief counseling

Education - Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Alternative education

Policy Council Action Steps:

- explore new funding sources for alternative education
- investigation of effective alternative learning strategies and effective behavior management
- explore the expansion or addition of services to reach expelled and displaced students

Quality schools

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage the expansion of teen parent curricula and services
- explore partnership opportunities for on-site childcare and parent mentoring

Job training

Policy Council Action Steps:

- promote positive awareness of the job opportunities available through vocational training
- promote policies that improve access to career development opportunities

Early Care and

Education - Children

(0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Improve affordability of childcare

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage local funding for child care along with increased state and federal funding
- encourage tax incentives and employer assistance for child care
- support increased private investment in child care

Ensure quality care is available to all children 0-5

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage development of statewide professional development plan
- support creation of child care enhancement program with rating system linked to compensation
- support efforts to increase pay and benefits commensurate with education

Ensure that all children enter school ready to learn

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage development and health screenings of all children
- support extensive training for child care professionals on early brain development, child developmentally appropriate practice/best practice with young children
- encourage parent involvement in the lives of children by teaching parents developmentally appropriate activities in which they can engage their children

Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Financially stable homes and families

Policy Council Action Steps:

- support career explorations and preparation from early childhood through adolescence
- support funding for job readiness

Appropriate child care

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage local funding for child care along with increased state and federal funding
- support exploration of child care options for families with limited incomes

Parent Involvement and Skills - Parents and

guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Promoting quality family time

Policy Council Action Steps:

- ask social service organizations to work collaboratively to promote and encourage attendance to family events, such as spring flings, fall festivals, school fairs, Kick-off day at the Quad, and health fairs. Majority of these events are free
- ask agencies to promote family meal time and in home nurturing activities
- exchange information on current events so all members know each others activities, such as developing a common calendar

Parent education and support

Policy Council Action Steps:

- encourage development and funding of programs that provide parent education and support
- ask the schools to incorporate parent education into their PTA programs

Modeling and promoting pro-social behavior

Policy Council Action Steps:

- promote character education and pro-social behavior through programs and agency work

Policy Recommendation

1. Allow children facilitation teams to use local funds for assessment and evaluation
2. Provide funds through local school systems for parents to attend parenting programs for children expelled from school
3. Director for Children's Policy Council
4. Establish local funds and increase state funding for childcare

Additional Tuscaloosa County Children's Policy Council Members:

Sandra Ray
Jennifer Clark
Rev. Vernon Swift
Dr. Debra Nelson Gardell
Gretchen Sims
Dr. Margaret Purcell
Earnestine Tucker
Ruth Gaddis
Amelia Bomar

Accomplishments

1. Numerous agencies belonging to the CPC assisted with hurricane Katrina relief.
2. CPC member Jennifer Clark, Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, has sponsored several community wide parenting programs like "It's Time to Talk" coming up Oct. 8th in Tuscaloosa.
3. Dozens of grant application have been approved by the council and resulted in grant awards for our members and the community.
4. A council agency, the Tuscaloosa Family Resource Center, has implemented the nationally accredited Parent Project program.
5. Several CPC member agencies have partnered this year on grants which have been awarded. (TFRC & CAPS, TFRC & Bradford, TFRC, Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy & Bradford).
6. Our CPC formed the Tuscaloosa Children and Family Coalition and secured a UPS implementation grant. Under this grant we have begun Project CEASE as a collaborative effort to prevent substance abuse in a particular area of Tuscaloosa County.